

In the Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A method for creating a search string using a computer system, the computer system having a processor, a display, and a browser, the computer system programmed with a server-based program called a search builder, the method comprising the steps of:
 - selecting a search topic;
 - defining a plurality of word categories related to the search topic;
 - forming a controlled vocabulary word group for each word category;
 - populating each controlled vocabulary word group with a plurality of preselected words [within] related to the word category, each of the plurality of preselected words within each word group selected to vary the scope of a search relative to the remaining words in the controlled vocabulary word group;
 - generating a first search string by selecting a first word from each of a plurality of [the] controlled vocabulary word groups to create a search string;
 - transmitting the first search string to a search engine;
 - receiving a first data set from the search engine;
 - creating a second search string by replacing the first word of a first controlled vocabulary word group of the first search string with second word from the first word group;
 - transmitting the second search string to the search engine; and,
 - receiving a second data set from the search engine.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the step of selecting a search topic includes the steps of:

depicting on the display at least one search topic;
the user selecting the search topic from the at least one search topic; and,
responsive to selection by the user of the search topic displaying a plurality of pre-selected word groups.

3. (Currently amended) The method of claim 2 wherein the step of generating a first search string comprises the steps of:

displaying a plurality of word group headings to the user;
the user selecting a first word group heading;
displaying the pre-selected controlled vocabulary words populating the first word group to the user;
the user selecting a first word from the first controlled vocabulary word group;
entering the first word from the first word controlled vocabulary group into a first search string;
displaying the plurality of word group headings to the user;
the user selecting a second word group heading from the plurality of displayed word groups;
displaying the pre-selected controlled vocabulary words populating the second word group;

the user selecting a first word from the second controlled vocabulary word group; and,

adding the first word from the second controlled vocabulary word group to the first search string.

4. (Original) The search builder display method described in claim 1 wherein the visual cue includes displaying the search word types in selected color codes and in text.

5. (Original) The search builder display method described in claim 4 where the step of displaying the word types includes displaying standardized terms identifying each word type, the terms selected from the group consisting of a subject, action, feature, knowledge, location, date and domain.

6. (Original) The search builder display method described in claim 4 wherein the visual cue includes displaying the search groups color coded to the word types.

7. (Currently amended) The search builder display method described in claim 1 wherein the step of displaying the pre-selected controlled vocabulary words in a group to the user includes displaying pre-arranged controlled vocabulary drop down menus for each word group.

8. (Original) The search builder display method described in claim 1 wherein the step of entering the first word from the first word group includes displaying the first word in a text box and in the display associated with the word group.
9. (Original) The search builder display method described in claim 1 wherein the step of selecting a first word from the first word group includes selecting an accept button which enters the first word into a search string.
10. (Original) The search builder display method described in claim 1 which further comprises the step of displaying a clear button which when clicked deletes words in the text box.
11. (Original) The search builder display method described in claim 1 which further comprises the step of displaying a selected search word includes displaying the selected search word in a sequence of words color coded to correspond to the word group from which the selected search word was selected.
12. (Original) The search builder display method according to claim 1 further comprises displaying a topics button that when selected displays a list of the available search topics.

13. (Original) The search builder display method described in claim 1 which further comprises the step of displaying a search button which when clicked displays a color coded search string comprised of at least one selected word and a list of pre-selected search engines or searchable databases.

14. (Original) The search builder display method described in claim 1 which further comprises the step of displaying a clear and start over button which when selected displays a list of pre-arranged search engines or searchable databases.

15. (Original) The search builder display method described in claim 1 which further comprises displaying a Save Search button which when selected saves a search string builder configuration and search word query.

16. (Original) The search builder display method described in claim 15 which further comprises displaying a Load Last Saved Search button and a text box containing Saved Searches, the Load Last Search button operable to enter a saved search word query into a text box.

17. (Currently amended) A computer implemented method of searching the world wide web comprising the steps of:

selecting a topic to be searched;

creating a hierarchical search string comprising an ordered series of search words from a plurality of search categories, one search word selected from at least one of a plurality of pre-selected, ordered controlled vocabulary word groups associated with each respective search categories;

transmitting the ordered search string to a search engine; and,
receiving a first set of search results.

18. (Currently amended) A method of offering search services for searching the world wide web comprising the steps of:

providing a web site accessible through the world wide web;
providing access through the web site to a data base of files accessible through the world wide web;

providing a [pcategory of search] plurality of search categories that can be conducted through the web site;

for each search category providing a plurality of word groups from which to assemble a hierarchical search string, each word group associated with a search category related to the search topic;

populating each word group with a controlled vocabulary comprising a plurality of search terms of varying scope within each search category;

cueing a remote user to construct a hierarchical search string by sequentially displaying a plurality of categorical controlled vocabulary word groups, the user selecting a first word from at least one of the displayed controlled vocabulary word groups;

transmitting the search string to a search engine; [and,]

receiving and displaying a first search result to the user[.];

creating a second search string by replacing the first word of a first controlled
vocabulary word group of the first search string with second word from the first word
group;

transmitting the second search string to the search engine; and,

receiving a second data set from the search engine.